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ABSTRACT

This in-service training program, cooperatively developed by Haywood County, N.C. Public Schools and the Elementary Education Department of Western Carolina University, has six major points: 2) it is competency based; b) instruction is individualized; c) a team teaching approach is utilized; d) its design is a cooperative venture on the part of public school and university personnel; e) it relies heavily on the use of media; and f) it provides in-service training for classroom teachers, county supervisors, and university personnel. After important and desirable competencies are identified by the university staff and public school personnel, a training team consisting of a university staff member and four county school supervisors is developed. The university member, acting as team leader, is responsible for general orientation, pretesting of student competencies, and development of individualized learning programs. The supervisors assist in classroom supervision and in the evaluation of the competency level of students. The students in the program are responsible for evaluation of the competencies which they presently possess and for the determination of new competencies to be mastered. The program is now being field tested in the Haywood County, N.C. Public Schools. (HMD)s

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A COMPETENCY BASED PROGRAM OF INDIVIDUALIZED INSERVICE EDUCATION

Several administrative officials from the various local public schools had voiced the concern that many inservice programs were lacking a carry-over into the classroom. Teachers could pass a paper and pencil test and very little change occur in classroom instruction. Teachers would take a course in humanizing education and still dehumanize their classes. A teacher would study inquiry teaching in a course and would never use it in their classroom. These teachers could pass a written test but many could not implement the material.

After many discussions and the exchanging of ideas, Haywood County Public School Officials and the Elementary Education Department of Western Carolina University came up with the idea of a "Competency Based Program of Individualized Inservice Education." This is an attempt to marry theory and practice and to cause implementation of new ideas and practices in the classroom.

Identifying Competencies

The first step was to identify those competencies that the public schools wanted. To do this task the administration, teachers and supervisors made a list of competencies. The classroom teachers did this through a questionnaire. From the questionnaire the school district staff prepared a master list of competencies. With this master list the university staff and school district personnel designed a new inservice course. Here one can see how the ivory tower and the front lines combined to identify competencies that would be relevant and useful. If the theory did not work then it was to be revised and if the practice was not based on sound theory it was to be revised.

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University Role

After several attempts at individualizing university classes on campus, several things have become apparent. First of all if one can individualize a university class on campus then it seemed reasonable that it could be done out in the public schools for inservice. If the appropriate competencies are identified ahead of time then the task of individualizing is made much easier. When the interests and needs of the learner are considered as paramount, the learner puts forth a greater effort. The motivation and drive to learn comes from within the classroom teacher. They become self-initiated in learning.

A university staff member was selected to be the team leader. The team consisted of one university member and four county supervisors. The university member was responsible for general orientation, pre-testing of the competencies, module development and the holding of individual conferences with teachers to determine course prescriptions.

The university personnel would set down with the school district supervisors and diagnose each teacher's strengths and weaknesses. This information along with the pre-test would be used in individual conferences with teachers enrolled in the course. Each teacher would end up with a unique design to achieve the competencies that were found to be needed.

Supervisor's Role

The supervisors would also aid and assist in classroom supervision and assist in determining when the classroom teacher had attained their competency. They would become consultants to the teachers if they needed assistance. If a supervisor did not have a certain competency then he would develop it during the inservice program.

One of the great strengths of this program is that it up grades the supervisors and causes the supervisors to be an active participant in classroom change for specific competencies. Supervision through the use of T-V tapes and audio tapes not only helps the classroom teachers, but through team evaluations of tapes each supervisor gains the knowledge and strength of the total team.

Classroom Teacher's Role

Historically the inservice programs for classroom teachers has been a list of night classes or mini-courses. The titles of the courses has been the only thing a teacher could select. The method of studying and learning the content was determined by the professor and was the same for everyone in class. Usually mass assignments and large group instruction characterizes most inservice programs.

A whole new set of responsibilities is placed upon the classroom teacher. Instead of being a passive learner they must become actively involved. The teachers become responsible for evaluating those competencies they have and the ones they need to develop. Their interests and needs determine how the content and competencies will be mastered.

Another responsibility of the classroom teacher will be to demonstrate their competency with their students. By developing the competencies in their classroom one is assured that the teacher knows and can implement the competencies studied in the inservice program.

Course Structure

1st Session

A. Orientation

B. Competencies (goals and objectives)

C. Pre-test

2nd Session

A. Individual conference

B. Results of pre-test

C. Write first short term goals

D. Write tentative long term goals

3rd and 4th Sessions

A. Large group activities (optional)

B. View T-V tapes

C. Conferences

1. Individual

2. Large group

5th Session

A. Visit on-site with teachers during school day

6th Session

A. Whatever the group needs are

7th Session

A. Visit on-site

8th Session

A. Final writing of prescriptions

B. Re-evaluate short term goals

C. Re-evaluate long term goals

9th Session through 15th Session

A. On-site learning

B. On-site testing

C. On-site evaluation

Last Session

A. Share and tell

1. Each participant's view
2. Supervisor's view
3. University's view

B. Evaluation

C. Recommendations for future

Conclusions

A competency based program of individualized inservice education offers an exciting and unique blend of many of the latest innovations in education. It is felt that this model offers a very practical and realistic way to implement many of the competencies that school systems today are requiring their teachers to have or develop. It also strengthens and develops both school supervisors and university personnel.

Six major points of this inservice program are:

1. Competency based education
2. Individualized instruction
3. Team teaching
4. Cooperatively designed by public schools and university
5. Heavy use of media
6. Inservice training for:
   a. Classroom teachers
   b. Supervisors
   c. University personnel

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Bibliography

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